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AUTHOR Ikenberry, Stanley O.
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ABSTRACT

It is obvious that the roles for participation of faculty, students and administrators in campus governance are inadequately defined and that the organizational structure through which these roles might be performed is deficient. This paper considers the rationale for such faculty and student organizations and examines some issues that have to be confronted in an attempt to change the faculty-student-administration organizational structure. Some of the problems inherent in the institution of higher education as an organization are: the absence of a widely shared understanding about the meaning and purpose of the institution, the weakening of the forces of tradition, and the diffusion of goals and values of the participants. Issues that must be confronted in the organization debate are: the questions of jurisdiction, the problem of autonomy of authority versus shared influence, and the question of centralization versus decentralization. (AF)

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ROLES AND STRUCTURES FOR PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE: A RATIONALE – STANLEY O. IKENBERRY.

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY PARK, PA.

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ROLES AND STRUCTURES FOR PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE: A RATIONALE[1]

It is painfully obvious that the roles for participation of faculty, students, and administrators in campus governance are inadequately defined and that the organizational structure through which these roles might be performed is deficient. Moreover, the rationale on which a modernized structure might be built and new roles defined is grossly underdeveloped. The absence of such a rationale is especially critical at a time of rapid change when it is not only clear that many colleges and universities have outgrown their governance structures, but that new structures and new patterns of relationships will be devised with or without a rationale.

Expansion and growth in institutions of higher learning since World War II has been astronomical. In the main, however, the expansion has been a simple, linear extension of traditional models of organization, curriculum and architecture -- models now inadequate to meet contemporary demands. The familiar models worked reasonably well in an earlier day, for less complex institutions, with faculties in which most members knew each other personally and were engaged in the institution's primary mission, teaching.[2] Perhaps such conditions continue to predominate in some colleges and universities, but for the rapidly expanding two-year college, the emerging university, the multipurpose state college, the now classic multiversity and others, the model no longer approximates reality.

It is important to understand the magnitude of the task. Burton Clark states the case well when he writes as follows:

> One is tempted to say of the gigantic campus of the near future that there will be no society there. It becomes clearer each year that if there is to be a society there, it must be continuously

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[1] By Stanley Ikenberry, Professor of Higher Education and Associate Director, Center for the Study of Higher Education, The Pennsylvania State University.

[2] William K. Selden, "Some Observations on the Governance of the American University." The Teachers College Board, LXVIII, 4 (January, 1967), pp. 277-288.

> planned for and worked at. For a long time we have been able to depend on an emergent unplanned social structure -- personal ties generated by students and faculty -- to infuse academic camp grounds with saving elements of human caring. But now no longer: Students and faculty will occasionally generate a humane social structure in a massive educational enterprise, but we can less and less depend on it. Growth is too fast; specialization is too fragmenting, economic logics of efficient manpower processing are too much in command. The crucial aspect of reform in American higher education is to devise substructures on the large campus that promote informal influence and a sense of personal contact instead of substructures that build walls of impersonality and formal (and seemingly arbitrary) authority.[3]

The challenge of the seventies is to build organizational structures for communication, decision making and human relationships equal in complexity to the vast network of physical structures constructed during the sixties. The remainder of this paper will consider the rationale for such faculty and student organizations in higher education and examine four issues which may need to be confronted in an attempt to modernize the faculty-student-administration organizational structure.

Institutions of Higher Learning as Organizations

If one were to recast the structure of colleges and universities and suggest new roles for faculty and student organizations, the peculiarities of institutions of higher learning as organizations must be understood. Indeed, it is precisely this lack of understanding which causes student, faculty and administrative groups alike to grab for power at inappropriate places and to become disillusioned and frustrated when they find that the power they sought and thought they had in reality never existed.

Etzioni suggests two broad classes of organizations: production and professional.[4] By far the most common of the two is the production

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[3]Burton R. Clark, "The New University." The American Behavioral Scientist, (May-June, 1968). p. 4.

[4]Amitai Etzioni, Modern Organizations. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964).

oriented organization such as a factory, a business or the military. In such organizations it is generally possible to establish organizational goals and the policies and procedures to be followed in the achievement of those goals at the upper levels of the hierarchy of the organization. These can be interpreted and reinterpreted, being made more specific at each successive level, until the lowest levels of the organization are included.

Such a model is not equally applicable to a hospital, a research and development laboratory, a school, college, or a complex university. The difficulty encountered is that the hierarchy of a professional organization is restricted in its ability, that is to say its technical competence, to specify the procedures to be followed in the performance of the organization's mission. This technical limitation stems not only from the complexity of the task to be performed, but from the inability to predict the specific nature of the task in a given instance. It is for precisely this reason that it is necessary for such organizations to employ professionals rather than skilled craftsmen. It is also because of these technical limitations that there tend to be multiple lines of power and influence and an atypical reliance on professional staff in the determination of means, ends, and standards of performance.

Thus, in institutions of higher learning the authority of the hierarchy tends to be restricted. Even if the contemporary college president had the ultimate in full, unrestricted authority, he and his subordinates and their subordinates would find it difficult to order excellence. Consequently, the academy tends to rely on open communication, peer consensus, with mixed and unclear jurisdiction among administrators,

faculty and students.[5] Substituted for the hierarchy of the production-oriented organization must be a clear understanding of the mission of the institution and a shared sense of common values and standards by professionals and emerging professionals.

A recent report of the Study Commission on University Governance at Berkeley, however, admits that "The melancholy truth is there is no widely shared understanding about the meaning and purpose of the institution. Lacking the unifying force which flows spontaneously from common understanding, the system is held together by a bureaucratic organization whose weakness is exposed whenever it is directly challenged."[6] Specifically, the higher education organizational structures of the past no longer appear effective in building shared purpose and values, the ideology essential to the effective functioning of institutions of higher learning. It is precisely at this point that effective faculty-student-administrative organizations become not only desirable, but perhaps essential in reestablishing meaning and purpose in American higher education.

C. Michael Otten provides an interesting view of the past when he describes the administration of Benjamin Ide Wheeler, president of the University of California more than a half-century ago. "Loyalty" to the university was strong, a kind of family lo alty. Wheeler is said to have played the role of father and frequently addressed the student body as his children. "Loyalty was not just an emotional by-product of a gathered group of undergraduates; it was consciously defined, carefully nurtured,

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[5]Terry F. Lunsford, "Authority and Ideology in the Administered University." The American Behavioral Scientist, (May-June, 1968), pp. 5-13.

[6]"The Culture of the University: Governance and Education." (Report of the Study Commission on University Governance, University of California, Berkeley, California), (January 15, 1968), pp. 7-8.

and deliberately sustained by Wheeler himself."[7] The loyalty at California was strong but not atypical of that which might have been found on many college campuses up through World War II. It not only bound the campus together with a common sense of meaning and purpose,it remained strong following graduation and formed the foundation for strong alumni loyalties which many institutions continue to enjoy.

The campus of fifty years ago, however, has changed. The force of tradition has weakened, goals and values are more diffused, and the backgrounds and life styles of the participants less homogeneous. Such changes are felt not only in institutions of higher learning, but in all aspects of contemporary society.[8] Substituted is a new set of values which emphasizes diversity, pluralism, moderation, compromise and the mediation rather than supression of conflict. But such values place institutions of higher learning in a vulnerable position; they do not evoke strong loyalties, they are difficult to defend, they do not suggest priorities or courses of action and leave the institution open to poorly reasoned demands for irresponsible and radical change.[9] The great danger of this deficiency is not only the confusion and conflict frequently quite obvious, nor the reduced effectiveness it implies, but rather the invited threat to the very freedom so essential to maintain colleges and universities as functioning professional organizations.

The burden of these organizational and structural deficiencies is frequently taken on by administrators, compelled to become specialists in

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[7]C. Michael Otten, "Ruling Out Paternalism: Students and Administrators at Berkeley." The American Behavioral Scientist, (May-June, 1968), p. 28.

[8]Logan Wilson, "Changing University Governance." Educational Record, L, (Fall, 1969), pp. 388-404.

[9]Martin Trow, "Conceptions of the University: The Case of Berkeley." The American Behavioral Scientist, (May-June, 1968), pp. 14-27.

creating and spreading official ideologies for many of the same reasons President Wheeler did so fifty years ago. But the nature of higher education and the nature of society no longer enable a similar measure of success. Administrators will continue to be indispensible in this regard, but the burden may no longer be carried by the administration alone. Nor indeed was the burden carried alone by Wheeler. The business of building an ideology, a cohesive sense of organizational purpose, must be carried by all.

The organizational structure and substructure of today's college or university must be refashioned to enable faculty and students, as well as administrators, to shape, to interpret and to communicate the ideology of the institution. It is in this sense that faculty and student organizations are both indispensable and underdeveloped in nearly every college and university in the land.

The Organization Debate.

Several issues frequently emerge in the organization debate. Certainly among the more common of the points of discussion is the question of jurisdictions: who shall be concerned with which issues? It is on questions of jurisdiction that the lack of understanding of colleges and universities as organizations is most clearly apparent. In a fine Weberian sense, there are those who would allocate certain areas of responsibility to students, certain matters to faculty, and reserve other decisions exclusively for the administration.

Kerlinger illustrates this point of view when he suggests that "Educational policy making is, or should be, a faculty function. Only the faculty of the university is qualified to decide the structure and content of courses of instruction, instructional programs and curricula,

and means and methods of teaching."[10] Using concepts of legitimacy, competence and responsibility, Kerlinger suggests that students should participate in decision making in areas such as student discipline, living conditions, student publications and social affairs. "Matters of actual educational moment, on the other hand are not appropriate for student decision making."[11] Sidney Hook sets forth a similar view and one not at all uncommon among many college faculties.[12]

But such suggestions ignore the special nature of institutions of higher learning as organizations. Such careful designation of functions, such precise divisions of labor, are neither conceptually sound nor practically viable. The AAUP Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students suggests that "As constituents of the academic community, students should be free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and on matters of general interest to the student body. The student body should have clearly defined means to participate in the formulation and application of institutional policy affecting academic and student affairs."[13]

As in few other organizations, it is essential that all members of the academic enterprise help shape and enhance the ideology, the purpose and functioning of the institution. Separation of the institution into segments, educational versus noneducational, or academic concerns versus

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[10] Fred N. Kerlinger, "Student Participation in University Educational Decision making." The Teachers College Record, LXX,1 (October, 1968), p. 45.

[11] Fred N. Kerlinger, Ibid., p. 45.

[12] Sidney Hook, "The Architecture of Educational Chaos." Phi Delta Kappan, LI, 2 (October, 1969), 68-70.

[13] AAUP Joint Statement, "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students." AAUP Bulletin, LIV, 2 (June, 1968), p. 260.

student concerns, ignores reality. The decision as to whether or not to build a gymnasium, as Columbia found out, is not always as unambiguous as it might appear. Accordingly, on the issue of jurisdictions, the rationale set forth argues against rigid jurisdictional definitions and for openness of communications. Needed is a regular rather than an improvised ad hoc structure for such discussions to take place.

A second issue frequently encountered in the organization debate is that of autonomy of authority versus shared influence. No veteran of academic government has failed to sit on the typical committee which spends the first full year of deliberations attempting to insure its autonomy and authority against every possible contingency. The familiar debate suggests that if any body at any level can in any manner overrule or modify the recommendations of the committee or organization, its deliberations are of no avail and adjournment is in order. Non-negotiable student demands and the tactics of authoritarian administrators are of the same inappropriate order.

The demand for absolute authority ignores the fact that no group -- trustees, administrators, faculty or students -- can or should lay claim to absolute control.[14] The concept of shared authority and responsibility is more appropriate, both to the faculty, student and administrative groups in shaping the ideologies and value systems which will guide institutional decisions and performance. Again, the AAUP statement emphasizes that the essential and overriding principle is that the enterprise is joint, that there must be adequate communication among all components, and a full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort. Unmonitored authority is destructive in the academic enterprise,

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[14]Logan Wilson, op. cit., p. 402.

whether it originates from trustees, students, administrators or faculty.

A third element of the organization debate frequently revolves around the question of centralization versus decentralization. If one were to assume a strong emphasis on the hierarchy of command, the logical point for acquisition of authority, power and influence is at the top of the organization. The recent rush of students into the upper levels of the hierarchy of colleges and universities as members of governing boards, faculty senates, presidential executive councils and the like suggests the inappropriate assumption that power, authority and influence rest at the "top" in colleges and universities. That there is a hierarchy in institutions of higher learning is obvious; that many crucial decisions, such as the initial allocation of resources, are made at the upper levels is also apparent; but that the upper levels of the hierarchy are the most effective points of participation for those students and faculty who wish to influence the course of colleges and universities, however, is open to much debate.

W. Donald Bowles is strong on this point when he writes "The road to student power is littered with the dead remains of grandiose 'all-university' schemes for approaching 'the major university issues.' In a very real sense there are no university issues, only departmental issues."[15] John Millett states "emphatically and unequivocally that the basic mission of a university in our society is professional education, the educational preparation of youth of appropriate talent to staff the

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[15] W. Donald Bowles, "Student Participation in Academic Governance." Educational Record, XLIX, (Summer, 1968), p. 259.

professions of our society."[16] In both instances, there is the clear suggestion that the ability to influence the nature of one's environment in the academy begins in the individual classroom and at the departmental level.

Returning again to the Berkeley report on University Governance, it is suggested that what is needed is not an improved and more powerful central forum for the expression of faculty and student interests, but a multiplication of forums at lower levels. The report discusses senates at the level of colleges, schools and departments where issues are more comprehensible, more manageable, and more likely to evoke participation of those vitally concerned.

McLendon of NYU observes that although appointments and promotions may indeed be formally made by the board of trustees, they originate and tend to be determined at the departmental level. For this reason, he suggests, "if students are going to be heard from in the process of decisions concerning tenure of professors . . . they must be heard from at the place where the decisions are determined: within the university departments."[17] In reconstituting the governance structure of institutions of higher learning, the attention currently directed toward the upper levels of the hierarchy might better be placed at the more basic levels -- the course, program or department.

At the heart of the matter is the ability of higher education to deal with conflicting points of view. Myth has it that colleges and universities are the home of the unorthodox, a safe haven for independent thought, a

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[16] John D. Millett, "Value Patterns and Power Conflict in American Higher Education." In W. John Minter and Patricia O. Snyder, (ed.). Value Change and Power Conflict, (Boulder Colorado: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education), (1969), p. 4.

[17] Hiram J. McLendon, "In Search of New Centers of Authority." New York University Education Quarterly, I, 2 (Winter, 1970), p. 6.

forum for the debate of competing points of view. In fact, most institutions of higher learning have been just the opposite. Few social institutions or organizations in our society screen their membership as carefully as do colleges and universities. Special purpose institutions such as church related colleges, professional schools, teachers colleges and others have been established, in part, to insure even greater uniformity in goals and values. Accreditation societies, legislative bodies and professional associations push toward conformity. In fact, colleges and universities are not well designed to accommodate conflict. It is the press toward general uniformity in goals and values, not the trend toward diversity or plurality, that has marked higher education institutions over the last half century.

Frick made this observation when he reported that "participants in the enterprise of higher education must understand that hostility, conflict, anxiety, guilt and defensiveness are generated within the college community . . . . It is obvious that there are many conflicts both within the faculty and between the faculty and others. These tend, for the most part, to be swept under the rug, suppressed."[18] In short, the typical conflict resolution mechanism in institutions of higher learning has been to deny the existence of conflict or to avoid conflict through inaction. When conflict becomes open and obvious, institutions of higher learning find it difficult to manage.

As an alternative, it might be more appropriate to recognize that there are from time to time very legitimate points of conflict between the

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[18] Ivan E. Frick, "Reflections on Participatory Democracy." Liberal Education, LV, (May, 1969), pp. 268-269.

interests and concerns of professors and those of students, between administrators and faculty, as well as conflicts within the membership of these various groups. Is the currently popular organizational practice of placing students on faculty committees, on senates and on governing boards, usually in minority roles, the most effective fashion of identifying and facing honest differences among various interest groups? Is it yet another attempt to gloss over or suppress these differences through co-optation? If instituions of higher learning are, in fact, to fulfill their role as a haven for the unorthodox, the structure must accommodate it.

Summary.

It is a cruel paradox to find that colleges and universities are of unequaled importance to both the individual and to society, while many institutions are unsure of purpose, bewildered by conflict and ready to recall the freedom of the academy in favor of certainty and order. One of the problems is that institutions of higher learning have outgrown their organizational structure. The simplistic faculty, student and administrative organizational patterns of the past were designed for an earlier day, for a different social institution, in a wildly different context.

The nature of colleges and universities as complex organizations is not well understood, either within the confines of the campus or beyond. The special qualities of the organization demand as understanding of purpose and ideology by all concerned, regardless of position in the hierarchy. This condition is not met on most campuses and consequently, colleges and universities are vulnerable to attack both from within and by external forces as well.

One crucial task is the reform of the substructures of the American campus in such a way as to promote greater influence and personal contact by a great variety of individuals and groups. Recasting and strengthening student-faculty-administrative organizations is essential.

Jurisdictional definitions need not and should not be tightly drawn. Demands for complete autonomy of authority, whether issued by students, faculty or administrators, should be treated as lightly as they are made. Because of the nature of institutions of higher learning as complex organizations, first efforts at restructuring and strengthening the organizational structure might well begin at the departmental level rather than with senates and boards of trustees. The eventual aim should be to enable institutions of higher learning to be the centers of free inquiry and havens of divergent and unorthodox thought they have so long professed to be.